RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AT SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY:
Students Respond with Social Action

Author Contacts:

Scott Myers-Lipton, Ph.D. (lead author)
Human Rights Institute, Advisory Board Member
Professor, Sociology
San José State University
smlipton@sjsu.edu

William Armaline, Ph.D.
Human Rights Institute, Director
Assoc. Professor, Sociology
San José State University
william.armaline@sjsu.edu

SJSU HRI Website: http://www.sjsu.edu/hri
SJSU HRI on Twitter: @SJSUHumanRights

This booklet focuses on the racial and social justice legacy at San José State University, with a focus on how the students responded with social action. The goal of the booklet is to educate the campus and larger community about the rich and vibrant history of SJSU.

By exposing and exploring the history for racial and social justice at San José State, the SJSU Human Rights Institute's hope is that the campus community will use it to fashion policies and practices that are supportive of students development, and that are anti-racist. The Institute also hopes that SJSU faculty and staff will use the booklet to educate our students about this "justice legacy" thread, which has run throughout the campus history.

This booklet is composed of 11 chapters, which include:

1. Edwin Markhum, "The Man with the Hoe" and Tower Hall
2. Japanese American Internment at the Men's Gymnasium
3. Chicano Commencement and the Walkout
4. Tommie Smith, John Carlos, and the Statues
5. Gaylord Nelson's Earth Day and the Burying of a New Ford Maverick
6. Re-establishment of the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP)
7. CAFÉ J and the Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage
8. Students for DMH and the Fight for Air Conditioning
9. Donald Williams Jr. and Students for Racial Justice
10. Student Homeless Alliance's the Push for Emergency Beds on Campus
11. Who Will Write the Next Chapter
12. Appendix: A Living Document - Possible Additional Chapters

The readings include an overview of the major SJSU social action and justice events that have occurred on campus, as well as videos and other resources that can be used when teaching this material. The booklet's themes focus on issues raised by Spartans, such as:

- American identity
- economic rights (e.g., right to a living wage, a good education, etc.)
- environmental degradation,
- equality
- human dignity
- intersectionality
- justice
- oppression
- racism
- and the role of protest in a democracy.

With this legacy, it is not surprising that SJSU has buildings named the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library and Yoshihiro Uchida Hall, and has such monuments as the César E. Chávez Monument: Arch of Dignity, Equality and Justice and the Tommie Smith and John Carlos Sculpture Garden. Social action and the quest for justice is in the DNA of San José State.

The above chapters do not include every social action that has taken place at SJSU. The hope is that if someone wants to add a chapter to this booklet, they would write it up in a similar format as the above chapters, and submit it to the SJSU Human Rights Institute (HRI). The HRI will approve well-researched chapters, and they will be added to the above chapters. In fact, several faculty have put forward possible future chapters, and they appear in the appendix. Thus, this booklet becomes a living document of the racial and social justice, and social action legacy at San José State. It should be noted that a shorter version of this booklet was published by Dean Walt Jacob's on his website in 2018 under the title "Social Action: It is In Our DNA."

Chapter 1: Edwin Markham, "The Man with the Hoe" and Tower Hall

Historical Background:

Charles Edward Anson Markham, an 1872 graduate from the California State Normal School in San José, the predecessor of San José State University, wrote "The Man With the Hoe", a poem that has been described as "the battle-cry of the next 1,000 years". After Markham's graduation, her lived in a small house at 432 South 8th Street, just off campus, and it was there that he penned "The Man With the Hoe" (see below). The poem was inspired by Jean-François Millet's painting "L'homme à la houe", and it is has been described as one of the most successful poems of the early 20th century, earning Markham over $250,000.[i]

Over the years, Markham stay connected to the campus. In 1904, Markham wrote a poem for the student publication, "The Normal Pennant", and in 1915, he returned to San José to give a lecture to over 400 people. At that lecture, President Morris Daily described Markham as "the most distinguished graduate" of the school. In 1928, Markham served as a judge to a student poetry contest, and in 1932, the campus celebrated his 80th birthday by hosting an assembly.

Event:

Today, Edwin Markham is recognized with a plaque on the left corner of the first and oldest building at San José State University (i.e., where the people are gathered in the above photo). However, the poem on the plaque is another Markham poem entitled "Outwitted", which focuses on the less controversial themes of forgiveness, love, and inclusion.[ii]

“The Man With the Hoe”:

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages in his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.

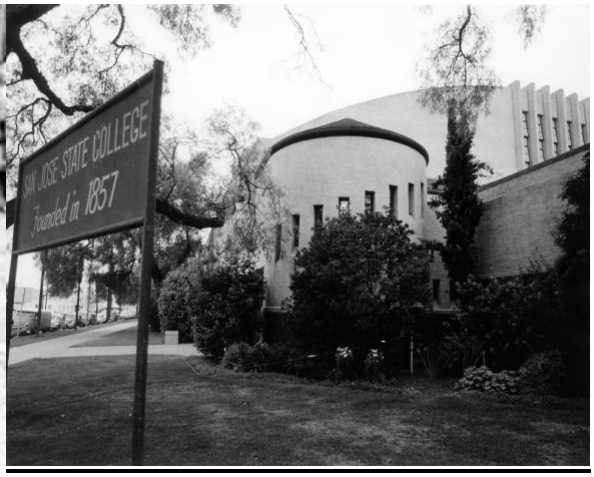
Who made him dead to rapture and despair,
A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,
Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?
Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath blew out the light within this brain?

Is this the Thing the Lord God made and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?
Is this the Dream He dreamed who shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?
Down all the stretch of Hell to its last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—
More tongued with censure of the world’s blind greed—
More filled with signs and portents for the soul—
More fraught with danger to the universe.
What gulfs between him and the seraphim!
Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him
Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?
What the long reaches of the peaks of song,
The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?
Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;
Time’s tragedy is in that aching stoop;
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the Judges of the World,
A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
is this the handiwork you give to God,
This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched?
How will you ever straighten up this shape;
Touch it again with immortality;
Give back the upward looking and the light;
Rebuild in it the music and the dream;
Make right the immemorial infamies,
Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,
How will the Future reckon with this Man?
How answer his brute question in that hour
When whirlwinds of rebellion shake the world?
How will it be with kingdoms and with kings—
With those who shaped him to the thing he is—
When this dumb Terror shall reply to God
After the silence of the centuries?[iii]

Chapter 2: Japanese American Internment and the Men's Gymnasium



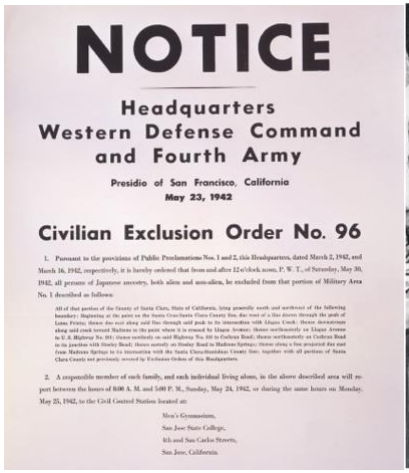
Historical Background:

Two months after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which ordered the Secretary of War to create military areas within the United States where "any or all persons may be excluded." When the posters went up, it was clear who this order was directed at, with large print stating "INSTRURCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY". Executive Order 9066 led to the incarceration in prison camps of 120,000 Japanese, two-thirds of which were U.S. citizens.[iv]

Executive Order 9066 was part of a century-old government policy at the city, state, and federal levels that discriminated against Asian Americans. For example, in 1860, San Francisco enacted a law to deny Chinese students' admittance into K-12 schools, and in 1870, the city denied jobs to Chinese on public projects. At the state level, discrimination was written into California law in 1851, with the enactment of the Foreign Minter's tax, which charged a tax on Chinese and Mexicans to discourage them from mining. Moreover, the new California Constitution of 1879 stated that, "No Chinese shall be employed by any State, county, municipal or other public work" and that "No corporation now existing or hereafter formed under the laws of this State, shall under the adoption of this constitution, employ directly or indirectly, in any capacity, any Chinese or Mongolian." The federal government wrote discrimination into the law with the passage of the 1870 Naturalization Act, which denied citizenship rights to the Chinese, and once again in 1882, with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited all immigration of Chinese skilled and unskilled workers.[v]

As the federal government passed these racist policies against Chinese residents and potential immigrants, U.S. businesses, which still needed cheap labor, turned to other Asian countries for workers, including Japan and the Philippines. However, many Whites had anger about Asians working in the United States, which led to the federal government enacting the Immigration Act of 1924, which banned all immigration from any Asian nation. When World War 2 broke out, this anti-Asian sentiment, which had been part of the American fabric of life for 100 years, was directed towards people of Japanese ancestry, regardless of whether they were U.S. citizens.

The Events:



NOTICE

Headquarters
Western Defense Command
and Fourth Army

Presidio of San Francisco, California
May 23, 1942

Civilian Exclusion Order No. 96

1. Pursuant to the provisions of Public Proclamations Nos. 1 and 2, this Headquarters, dated March 2, 1942, and March 16, 1942, respectively, it is hereby ordered that from and after 12 o'clock noon, P. W. T., of Saturday, May 30, 1942, all persons of Japanese ancestry, both alien and non-alien, be excluded from that portion of Military Area No. 1 described as follows:

All of that portion of the County of Santa Clara, State of California, lying generally north and northwest of the following boundary: Beginning at the point on the Santa Cruz-Santa Clara County line due west of a line drawn through the peak of Loma Prieta; thence due east along said line through said peak to its intersection with Llagas Creek; thence generally along said creek toward Madrone to the point where it is crossed by Llagas Avenue; thence northwesterly on Llagas Avenue to U. S. Highway No. 101; thence northerly on said Highway No. 101 to Cochran Road; thence northwesterly on Cochran Road to its junction with Hecker Road; thence easterly on Hecker Road to Madrone Springs; thence along a line projected due east from Madrone Springs to its intersection with the Santa Clara-Stanislaus County line; together with all portions of Santa Clara County not previously covered by Exclusion Orders of this Headquarters.

2. A responsible member of each family, and each individual living alone, in the above described area will report between the hours of 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M., Sunday, May 24, 1942, or during the same hours on Monday, May 25, 1942, to the Civil Control Station located at:

Men's Gymnasium,
San Jose State College,
4th and San Carlos Streets,
San Jose, California.

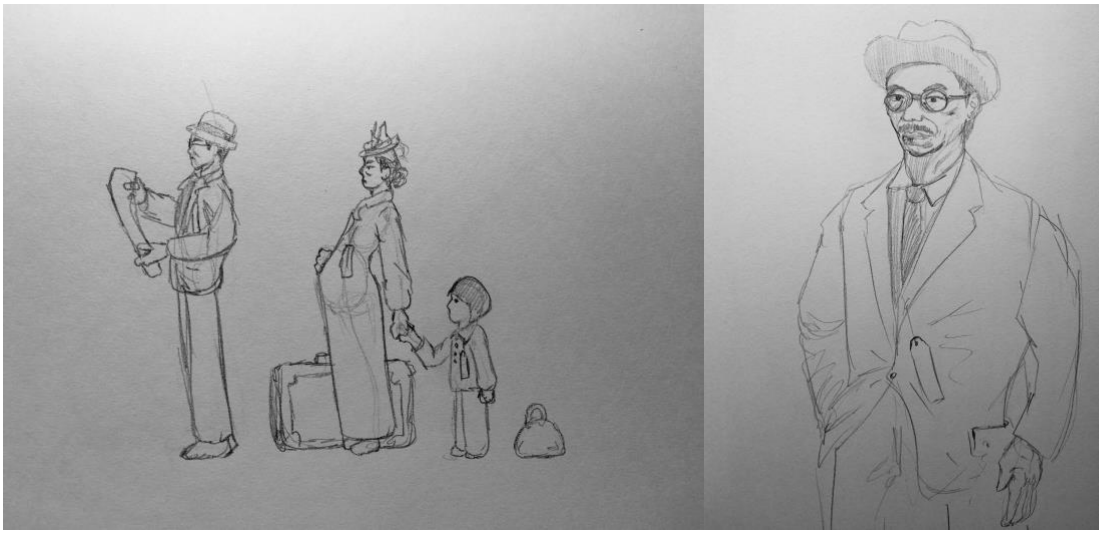
Men's Gym being used as a check-in point for Japanese Americans, 1942 via SJSU Special Collections

On Saturday, May 23, 1942, Civilian Exclusion Order No. 96 was issued by Lt. General L.J. DeWitt, US Army, to all "All Persons of Japanese Ancestry" living in Santa Clara County. A responsible adult, preferably the head of the household, was told to report to the "Men's Gymnasium, San Jose State College, 4th and San Carlos Streets" on May 24 and 25, where they were given more information about the "evacuation" (i.e., forced removal), which was to be completed by the following Saturday, May 30. Over the next several days, approximately 6,000 people, mostly American citizens, reported to the Men's Gymnasium, and were given more detailed information about the removal. They were told to bring only what they could carry, which resulted in the loss of almost everything they owned. The Men's Gymnasium, which was built in the early 1930s for sport, now turned into the beginning point for the incarceration of Japanese Americans living in Santa Clara County. Upon leaving San José, people were sent to Pomona or the Santa Anita racetrack in Los Angeles where they lived in horse stalls, and then on to the prison camps in Tule Lake, California, Poston, Arizona, and Heart Mountain, Wyoming, where they would be imprisoned for the next three years. At the end of World War 2, they were released into a hostile and racist society.[vi]

Today, the Men's Gymnasium has been renamed Yoshihiro Uchida Hall. Yosh Uchida, who began his education at San José State College in 1940 (the name had been changed in 1935), was the son on an immigrant farm worker, and was a student when World War 2 began. While Uchida joined the U.S. Army--and served in a segregated unit--Uchida's family members were processed at the Men's Gymnasium and imprisoned at Poston and Tule Lake internment camps. After the war, Uchida re-enrolled at San José State and completed his degree in Biology in 1947. Yosh went on to become the Judo coach, leading the Spartans to 45 National Championships in his 60 plus years as coach. He also served as the Judo coach for the 1964 U.S. Olympic Team.[vii]

In 2013, a group of students created Students for Public Art as Social Justice, with the goal of creating a free-standing memorial to recognize that Uchida Hall served as the starting point for the imprisoning of Japanese Americans in Santa Clara County during World War 2. The students worked closely with Jimi Yamaichi, one of the founders of the Japanese American Museum and who was processed at the Men's Gymnasium. In addition, the students worked with Dr. Wendy Ng, whose dissertation focused on the internment. Students for Public Art as Social Justice put forward a proposal to build a free-standing memorial, including drawings of the design of it.

Here are some of the drawings for the statue:

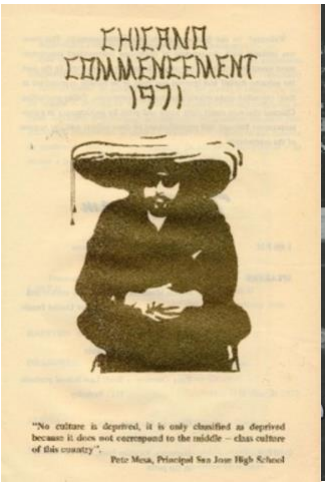


The proposal for the statue made its way to an Administrative committee, but no action was taken on the student proposal. Eventually, the students graduated, and the memorial was not built. However, a group of students have formed in the fall of 2021 under the banner of Justice for Japanese, and they have revived this vision of the University constructing an art installation to show SJSU's role in the internment of Japanese Americans.

Resources:

- Civilian Exclusion Order No. 96 issued by Lt. General L.J. DeWitt, http://imgzoom.cdlib.org/Fullscreen.ics?ark=ark:/13030/kt1j49p9dz/z1&&brand=oac4
- Japanese American Museum in San José, https://sanjose.org/listings/japanese-american-museum-san-jose, (accessed August 29, 2021).
- Photos: Japanese American internment at SJSU Special Collection Library, https://libguides.sjsu.edu/spartan-quest/uchida-hall (accessed September 3, 2021).
- Jimi Yamaichi, interview on KCBX, https://www.kcbx.org/post/94-year-old-jimi-yamaichi-recalls-san-jose-s-japantown-wwii-internment#stream/0 (accessed August 29, 2021).
- "Return of the Valley: Japanese American Experience After the WWII", Dir. Scott Gracheff, KTEH Public Television, 2009. www.returntothevalley.org (accessed 2/4/18)

Chapter 3: Chicano Commencement and the Walkout



Historical Background:

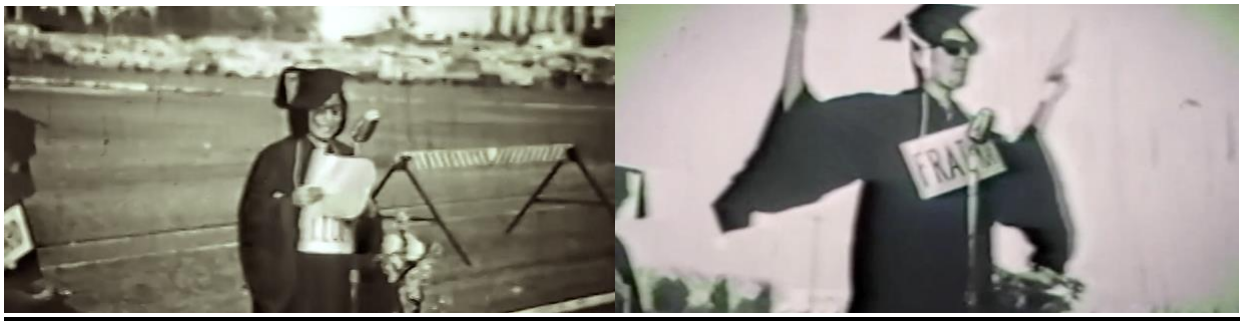
In the late 1960s, Mexican American students were frustrated that there were so few Chicano students at San José State. At the time, the Mexican American population was 17% in San José, but Mexican American were less than 1% of the student body. The Mexican American students that did attend San José State struggled financially, and they lacked the necessary support structure to be successful.[viii]

Upset by the lack of representation on campus, the Student Initiative, a Chicano student organization, developed a proposal to recruit more students. The student plan, which was endorsed by the then President Robert Clark, included recruiting Chicano students at local high schools, with a particular interest in the East Side Union High School District. However, the district administration was hostile to the students' recruitment plan. After several confrontations between the students and principals, the Community Service Organization (CSO)–a non-profit organization committed to the empowerment of Mexican Americans, and who had trained Cesar Chavez and Delores Huerta– convinced the district to allow the students to recruit during lunch and after school.[ix]

In addition to recruiting, the student plan focused on having San José State accept more Mexican American students. In the spring of 1967, the Student Initiative worked with President Clark on a plan to admit 12 Chicano students using a special admissions program of the CSU system, which allowed schools to admit 2% of all students as "special admission". And while the dominant culture thought that the program had been created to let students of color into college, in reality, it had been created by the state of California for athletes and wealthy students who had low GPAs, as well as other people the college wanted to admit.[x]

After all 12 Chicano students completed the fall semester of 1967 with a 3.0 GPA or higher, the students advocated for President Clark to significantly increase the number of Mexican American students admitted under the special admissions program. After reviewing the students' proposal, President Clark agreed to admit 250 Chicano students. However, the proposal needed the approval of Chancellor Glenn Dumke of the California State University system, which he

refused to give. In response, the students educated the campus and larger community about Chancellor Dumke's refusal to provide access to more Chicano students, and they began to plan a bold action.[xi]



The Events:

To draw attention to the injustice of having so few Chicano students at San José State, and the decision by the Chancellor to reject the students plan to increase the number of Mexican American students for the incoming class of 1968, the students decided to walk out of the university graduation. Out of a graduating class of 2,000 students, only 29 had Spanish surnames, with eight of these being athletes from other countries who had been recruited to San José State. Despite being just a few students–not by their fault but rather by a system that had excluded them–eleven Chicano students, along with 15 White students and seven White professors, walked out of the commencement just as President Clark was to address the graduating class.[xii]

On the day of the graduation, 200 campus and city police officers surrounded Spartan Stadium as the university and city thought that the students' disruption would lead to violence. However, there was no violence; the students just peacefully walked out of the stadium as they said they were going to do. As the students walked out, one of the Chicano student mother's cried out (incorrectly): "No…Don't give up your degree!" A few people booed. President Clark responded to the walkout by telling the audience that he was sympathetic to the students' peaceful demonstration since the California State University (CSU) system and society in general needed to provide more justice to Mexican Americans.

After walking out of the graduation, the students walked across 10th Street to an open part of the track field, where they held one of the first Chicano Commencement celebrations in the United States. Greeting the students and their families was Luis Valdéz, a San José State alum, and his Teatro Campesino, as well as Dr. Octavio Romano from the University of California, and over 200 supporters. The Teatro Campesino put on a play entitled "Chicano Commencement" and there were passionate speeches, with each student being given the opportunity to speak. Juan Garcia, a first-year student who attended the event, and who went on to become a professor at Fresno State, thought to himself, "Hey! We should have a separate commencement every year. I was that inspired." This protest led directly to the creation of the Equal Opportunity Program the following year, which was developed to help recruit and graduate Chicano and African American students.[xiii]

A second Chicano Commencement was organized three years later by the students. However, they decided not to disrupt the commencement, but rather to have their own separate commencement. Chris Jimenez, a student leader stated, "You shouldn't spoil someone else's party for your own…Let's have our own." The 1971 Chicano Commencement was held at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in San José, which was where Cesar Chavez worshipped and where he held many of his community organizing meetings. Instead of a protest, 30 students and their families gathered to recognize the accomplishments of the graduates, to honor their parents and the sacrifices they had made, and to inspire the sisters and brothers of the graduates to obtain a college education. Jimenez felt that, "[T]he highlight for me was the families jumping up and down and shouting when the graduates went up for their diplomas. It became a shouting match between families, they were so proud and happy." A few year later, Mexican American student leaders abandoned their separatist perspective, and decided to encourage students to attend both the main graduation ceremony and the Chicano Commencement. Soon after, the university embraced the event.

At the same time, not all are happy with the decision to not make a political statement with Chicano Commencement. Armando Valdez, a student who had participated in the first Chicano Commencement, and who would go on to become a behavioral scientist in Mountain View, stated, "It became a celebration and not a political occasion…I would rather have seen continued protest. The reality is, little has changed for Chicanos in this society." Jimenez remembers that, "They called us all sorts of names, vendidos, 'sellouts'…What did they do other than protest. Our philosophy was education. If you want social change, you need educated people." And Christina Ramos, a student organizer who had just completed a master's degree in Public Administration thinks that while Chicano Commencement had lost its political edge for a while, the anti-immigrant sentiment in the country has re-energized it. Ramos stated "It is still a political statement…We as Latinos are still not viewed as positive contributors to society. But we are still here. We are making a difference. We are graduating from college."

Finally, Gabe Reyes, a student organizer of the 1971 event and who later became the SJSU Special Assistant to the President for Campus Diversity, wonders whether if by joining the institution they wanted to change, they became co-opted by it, and changed little to nothing, stating, "It was a question we all wrestled with." Gabe went on to lead the effort to build on campus the César E. Chávez Monument: Arch of Dignity, Equality and Justice, since he wanted to recognize Chavez, who had started his community organizing in San José and was a frequent speaker on campus. Interestingly, it was a group of SJSU Sociology students that first connected Cesar Chavez to Fred Ross, who was the founder of the CSO, and who helped train Cesar to be a community organizer.[xiv]

In 2018, SJSU's Chicano Commencement celebrated its 50th anniversary, and today, it is common for over 2,000 people to attend this important event.[xv]

Resources

- Revisiting the 1968 Chicano Commencement Symposium, October 11, 2019, https://vimeo.com/365812673?fbclid=IwAR2_XklbjtVibpAkbXuYxN7OHwGR312SEsoAv9vD7pHsZgOnmGCF37QToAE (accessed September 5, 2021)
- CBS news story, "1960s-Era Chicano Student Activists Celebrate Historic SJSU Graduation Protest" October 11, 2019, https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2019/10/11/1960s-era-chicano-student-activists-celebrate-historic-sjsu-graduation-protest (accessed September 5, 2021)

Chapter 4: Tommie Smith, John Carlos, and the Statues

Historical Background:

In 1966, Tommie Smith and John Carlos were students at San José State, recruited here by the legendary track coach Bud Winters. Tommie Smith was from rural Texas and California, and he was studious, religious, and not initially interested in the Black protest movement. John Carlos was from Harlem, and he was talkative, loud, and was immediately drawn to the protest movement. Both would eventually become connected to Harry Edwards, a Sociology instructor, who taught a class on racism, and who had decided to call for a boycott of the Olympic Games.[xvi]

At that time, San José State had a student population of 24,000 students, with 72 African American students on campus (.3% of the population), 60 of which were athletes. The reality of the situation for these students were harsh. When the African American students attempted to find housing off-campus, they experienced racism, as most owners would not rent to them. In addition, the black and white athletes were recruited differently, with white recruits being treated to large fraternity parties and dates, while black recruits were matched with a “negro” faculty and given $20 for dinner. Harry Edwards and Ken Noel, who was a graduate student and former track star, began talking–very close to where the Smith and Carlos statues are today–about the need to change this for the next generation of students. Their conversations led to a "Rally on Racism at San José State" on September 18, 1967, which was attended by hundreds, including President Robert Clark. At the rally, the United Black Students for Action made nine demands to end racism at SJSU, including punishment for students and landlords who discriminated against blacks, and equal treatment of prospective athletic recruits. If the demands were not met, the students were going to stop the home opening football game “by any means necessary.” When a bomb threat was made, President Clark cancelled the football game.[xvii]

It was in this intense atmosphere, that Edwards put forward the Olympic Project for Human Rights, which called on athletes to boycott the 1968 Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City unless their five demands for racial equality were met. And while the boycott didn’t transpire, as

many athletes did not want to give up the opportunity to compete, the black athletes did decide to protest individually, but what form the protest would take was left up to the individual athletes.[xviii]

The Events

The athletes arrived in Mexico City in a frenzied atmosphere, as the Mexican military and police had killed over 300 students who were protesting for more democracy in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas on October 2, 1968, just 10 days before the opening Olympic ceremonies. The final heat for the 200-meter was on October 16, and in preparation, Tommie had asked his wife to bring him some Black gloves, because he knew what ever he was going to do, it had to be visual. In the 200-meter final, Tommie Smith ran a world record time of 19.83 seconds and took first place, with Peter Norman from Australia finishing second, and John Carlos finishing third. Now, it was time to protest. During the playing of the national anthem, while standing on the Olympic podium, Tommie and John raised their black-gloved fists, which represented power and human rights, bowed their heads to demonstrate that their action was non-violent and prayerful, and took off their shoes to represent the poverty African Americans experienced as a result of racism. In addition, John wore beads, which represented the lynching that blacks had experienced. Both men wore the button of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. Before walking out for the podium ceremony, Peter Norman asked to wear a button, as he wanted to stand in solidary with Tommie and John.

The backlash was immediate. Smith and Carlos were suspended from the Olympic team, expelled from the Olympic Village, and banned for life from the Olympics. When they returned to the USA, they received death threats and were denied jobs. Tommie had applied to be a San José police officer and was told by the police that they didn't take "traitors". Additionally, Tommie and John were followed by the FBI. Peter Norman also suffered, as he was not given the opportunity to compete in the 1972 Summer Olympics, even though his qualifying times were good enough to make the team. And even though Peter is considered one of the greatest sprinters in the history of Australia, he was not even invited to take part in the festivities for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. However, Tommie and John never forgot about Peter's decision to stand in solidarity with them on the Olympic podium, and when Peter died suddenly of a heart attack in 2006, they flew to Australia and carried his casket.[xix]

Thirty-five years after the actions in Mexico City, Eric Grotz, a white student at SJSU was in Dr. Coby Harris' Political Science class. In the class, Eric learned about how African Americans are not recognized in the same way that whites are recognized. After learning about the story of Tommie and John, Eric became so motivated that he led an effort by the Associated Students to build a statue so that students would know the true history of these two students. Eric's effort led to the Associated Students providing most of the $300,000 for the statue.

The students wanted a statue that looked like Tommie and John, while a University committee in charge of art on campus pushed for a statue that could take any form. The students' position won out. Then, the students wanted the statues to be placed in front of the office of the Associated Students, which was then on Paseo de San Carlos, since the statues focused on student activism. The Administration said that they didn't want to have the statues on Paseo de San Carlos since it would block fire trucks, and they preferred the statues to be placed off campus in front of the Spartan sports complex by the football stadium, arguing that this was an appropriate place because Tommie and John were athletes. The students fought against this idea, so a compromise was struck. The statues would be on the grassy area in front of Clark Hall. Not only was this a central spot on campus, it was somehow appropriate since Robert Clark, the President of SJSU in 1968, was one of the few white voices who strongly defended the actions of Tommie and John. The place picked for the statue is also the area where Harry Edwards and Ken Noel, a Master's student in Sociology, came up with the idea for the Olympic Project for Human Rights.[xx]

On October 16, 2005, on the 37th anniversary of when Smith and Carlos' raised their firsts in Mexico City, the statues were dedicated in front of several thousand people, including Tommie, John, Peter Norman (the Australian sprinter who finished 2nd), Harry Edwards, and Ken Noel. Ethel Pitts Walker, a theater art's professor, gave the keynote address, where she stated:

> Wherever there is discrimination and injustice, someone must raise a fist, for Martin said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' Wherever there is indignity and hatred, someone must stand up straight; for on another occasion Martin said, 'When evil men shout ugly works of hatred, good men must commit themselves to the stories of love.' Wherever there is poverty and ill-treatment, someone must go without shoes, for the old ancestors sang, 'I got shoes, you got shoes, all God's chillun got shoes.' Whenever there is cruelty and suffering, someone must bow their head.[xxi]

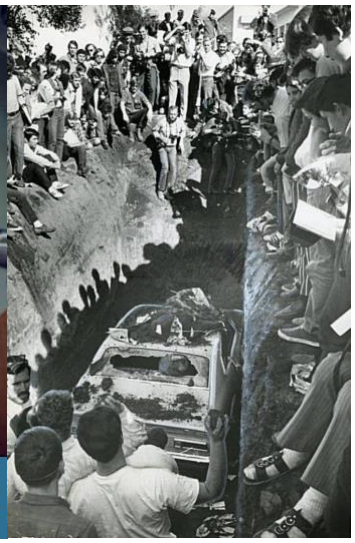
Today, the Tommie Smith and John Carlos Sculpture Garden continues to inspire its students, staff, faculty, and the larger community to take a stand for social justice. Importantly, they provide a "public space" for current student social justice activities.

Resources:

- Bonk, “San Jose Statement": https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-jun-26-sp-statue26-story.html (accessed September 3, 2021).
- Gazzaniga, “The White Man in That Photo”, Griot, October 3, 2015, http://griotmag.com/en/white-man-in-that-photo/ (accessed February 4, 2018).
- Leonard, “What Happened to the Revolt of the Black Athlete", https://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/jcr:acdd73b8-5fe1-4aca-b7c7-fa5047c79b81/2006-09-14-revolt.pdf (accessed September 3, 2021).
- Ethel Pitts Walker, “It is Finished”, October 17, 2005, keynote speech at unveiling of statues.
- Fists of Freedom, The Story Behind the ’68 Summer Games, Dir. George Roy, HBO Sports, 1999.
- Salute: The Story Behind the Image, Dir. Matt Norman, Matt Norman Films, 2008.

Chapter 5: Gaylord Nelson's Earth Day and the Burying of a New Ford Maverick

Gaylord Nelson speaks to an Earth Day crowd in Denver, Colorado, on April 22, 1970. You can also view the speech notes by Nelson.



Historical Background:

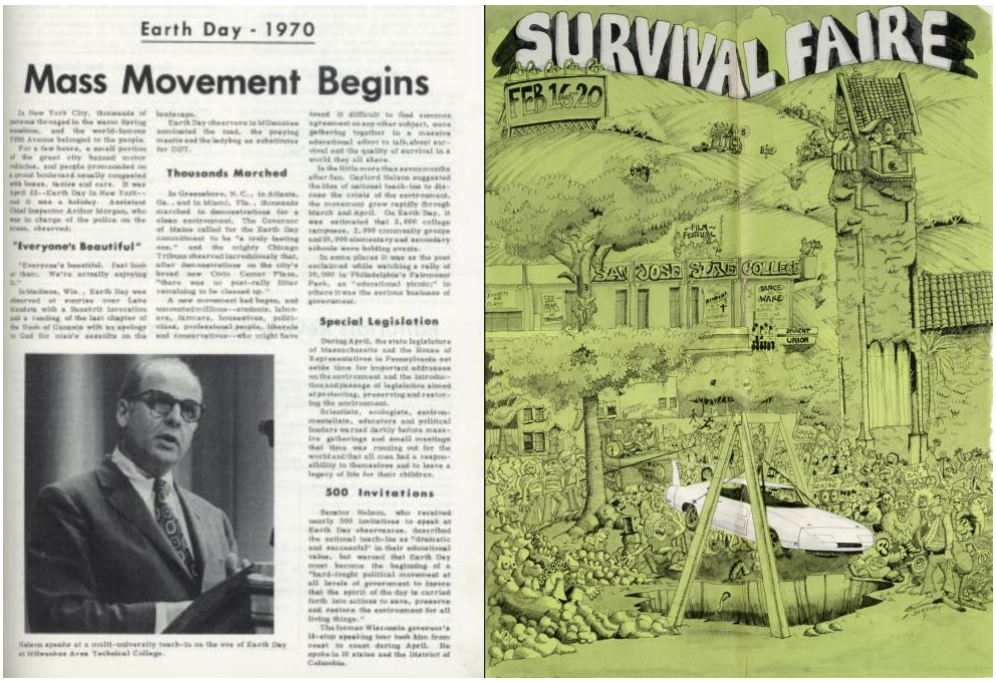
In 1934, Gaylord Nelson graduated from high school in Clear Lake, Wisconsin. After graduation, Gaylord tried two small colleges in Wisconsin, but realized he didn't yet have the skills to be successful in college, and wasn't yet ready to commit to studying. Gaylord decided to work for a year on road construction for the Works Progress Administration (WPA); at the end of the year, he decided to try college again, and this time he was ready to focus on his studies. Gaylord decided to attend San José State College, as his two sisters had also attended, and his Aunt Gertrude was a voice teacher on campus. San José State was 2,000 miles from home, and the student population was five times the size of Clear Lake. While in school, Gaylord focused on his studies, and he graduated with honors in political science.[xxii]

Gaylord returned to Clear Lake, where he decided to become a politician, first as a State Senator, then as Governor of Wisconsin, and finally, as a U.S. Senator. His passion was the environment, and as governor, he led the effort to pass a model conservation program to preserve wildlife habitat, open space, and recreational land with a one-cent sales tax on a pack of cigarettes. As a U.S. Senator, Gaylord continued promoting environmentalism, as he was the first senator to propose the banning of the pesticide DDT, and he worked tirelessly to ban phosphates in detergents.[xxiii]

In 1969, Senator Nelson was touring the West Coast, and it was here that he came up with his biggest idea yet to protect the environment. He had just toured a horrific oil spill in Santa Barbara, and he was flying to San Francisco, when he read an article focusing on how college students were using "teach-ins" as a way to educate the public about why it was important to oppose the war in Vietnam. He thought to himself, why not have an "environmental teach-in" to educate the public on the environmental threats to the planet. He knew there were already plans at several colleges to have campus protests in 1970 focusing on the environmental crisis. He thought, "If we could tap into the environmental concerns of the general public and infuse the student anti-war energy into the environmental cause, we could generate a demonstration that would force the issue onto the national political agenda." In Seattle, Senator Nelson decided to

announce a call for college campuses to hold environmental teach-ins during the following spring, and he chose April 22nd as the day.[xxiv]

The Events:



Earth Day - 1970

Mass Movement Begins

Thousands Marched

"Everyone's Beautiful"

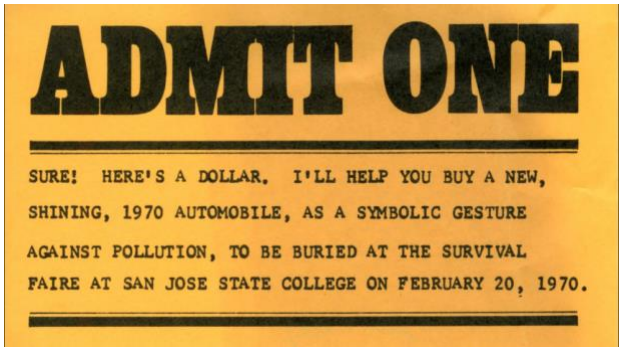
Special Legislation

500 Invitations

Nelson speaks at a multi-university teach-in on the eve of Earth Day at Milwaukee Area Technical College.

As Earth Day approached, San José State students in a Humanities 160 course created a class project that sent ripples throughout the nation. Dr. John Sperling had encouraged his 19 students, mostly art majors, to learn about a social problem, and then to take action to correct it. His students became interested in the environmental crisis facing the nation and world, and they came up with the idea of burying a car to help bring attention to the crisis. As Peter Ellis, a student organizer, recalls, “We were sitting around and somebody said, 'We ought to bury an engine.' Before the night was over, we were going to bury a Dodge Charger, a muscle car.” As part of this “street theater” event, students planned a “Survival Faire”, which included speakers, films, and of course, the burying of a new car, with the goal being to create a symbolic message, similar to the Boston Tea Party, that would galvanize the nation to end the production of millions of gasoline engines that were polluting the planet.

The students choose Feb. 20, six weeks before the 1st Earth Day, to bury the new car. In the month leading up to the first Earth Day, the students put their plan into action, raising $2,500 by selling shares of the car, enough to buy a new Ford Maverick. The students purchased the new Maverick from a Los Gatos car dealership, and they pushed it 12 miles to San José State. Once on campus, they put the car on display next to a prototype of a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) car, with one representing the past, and the other the future. As Dr. Sperling recalls, “This was part of the whole movement for the first Earth Day, and everybody in the whole university was watching them…I was there for the car's arrival…They put it in the middle of campus with velvet ropes around it. It was really quite a handsome thing.”[xxv]



As the day for the burial approached, local and national TV and newspapers began to take notice, as well as some campus advocates for the poor. In fact, students from the Black Student Union (BSU) argued that instead of money going toward a symbolic action of burying a new Ford Maverick, it should rather be used to help people of color and the poor. A professor was so moved by the BSU that he committed to raise $2,500 in a week for the Equal Opportunity Program.[xxvi]

On the day the Ford Maverick was to be buried, the students held a parade, pushing the car through the streets of downtown San José. The students walked as if in a funeral, along with three ministers and the San José State marching band playing in a dirge style. Students had dug a twelve-foot "grave", right where the Cesar Chavez Plaza is today. With thousands of students watching, the new Ford Maverick was rolled into its grave, symbolically marking the death of the gas engine and car.[xxvii]

A year later, the car was exhumed with the hope of being crushed into a small block in order to serve a cornerstone of the first rapid transit station in Santa Clara County.

In 1970, 20 million people participated in Earth Day. On that day, Senator Nelson stated,

> How we survive is the critical question. Earth Day is dramatic evidence of a broad new national concern that cuts across generations and ideologies. It may be symbolic of a new communication between young and old about our values and priorities…Environment is all of America and its problems. It is rats in the ghetto. It is a hungry child in a land of affluence. It is housing that is not worthy of the name; neighborhoods not fit to inhabit. Environment is a problem perpetuated by the expenditure of billions a year on the Vietnam War, instead of on our decaying, crowded, congested, polluted urban areas that are inhuman traps for millions of people…Our goal is not just an environment of clean air and water and scenic beauty. The objective is an environment of decency, quality and mutual respect for all other human beings and all other living creatures."

Today, 1 billion people participate in Earth Day in almost 200 countries.[xxviii]

Resources:

- Gaylord Nelson's First Earth Day Speech, https://doorcountypulse.com/sen-gaylord-nelsons-earth-day-speech/, (accessed September 3, 2021)
- Gaylord Nelson's First Earth Day Speech, video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oASqut7aSo (accessed September 3, 2021)
- SJSU Earth Day Collection, King Library, Digital Collection, https://digitalcollections.sjsu.edu/earth-day (accessed September 1, 2021)

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1

[i] Annette Nelson, "Edwin Markham, Famous Poet, 1872 Graduate of the California State Normal School," *SJSU's Legacy of Poetry,* www.sjsu.edu/people/annette.nellen/website/markham.htm (accessed September 2, 2017).
[ii] Nelson, "Edwin Markham, Famous Poet, 1872 Graduate of the California State Normal School."
[iii] Edwin Markam, "The Man With The Hoe," *Poets.org,* https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/man-hoe (accessed September 2, 2017).

Chapter 2

[iv] Wartime Defense Command and Fourth Army Wartime Civil Control Administration, "Exclusion Order for San Jose Japanese Internment, 1942," *Online Archive of California,* http://oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt3p30207v/?brand=oac4 (accessed September 10, 2017).
[v] California Assembly, *"Constitution of the United States, Declaration of Rights, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation; Constitution of the State of California, as last amended November 6, 1962; Act for the Admission of California into the Union; Constitutional history of California"* (Sacramento, California Legislature, Assembly, 1963).
[vi] Jill Rae Seib, *Spartan Daily*, May 15, 2006 "Uchida Hall was Once Transfer Point for Japanese American Internees" (PDF); Wartime Defense Command and Fourth Army Wartime Civil Control Administration, "Exclusion Order for San Jose Japanese Internment, 1942".
[vii] Pat Harris, "Yoshihiro Uchida Hall Rededication Nov. 7," *SJSU Blog*, October, 28, 2014, http://blogs.sjsu.edu/newsroom/2014/yoshihiro-uchida-hall-to-be-rededicated (accessed September 12, 2017); William Rhoden, "For 66 Years, a Force for Judo in the United States", *NY Times*, April 1, 2012, www.nytimes.com/2012/04/02/sports/san-jose-coach-yoshihiro-uchida-a-force-for-judo.html (accessed September 12, 2017).

Chapter 3

[viii] Humberto Garza, *Organizing the Chicano Movement: The Story of CSO*, E-book (Sun House, 2009),
[ix] Garza, *Organizing the Chicano Movement.*
[x] Garza, *Organizing the Chicano Movement.*
[xi] Garza, *Organizing the Chicano Movement.*
[xii] Garza, *Organizing the Chicano Movement;* Joe Rodriquez, "After 40 Years, Give or Take a Few, Chicano Commencement Endures", *San Jose Mercury News,* May 28, 2010, www.mercurynews.com/2010/05/28/after-40-years-give-or-take-a-few-chicano-commencement-endures/ (accessed October 3, 2017).
[xiii] Garza, *Organizing the Chicano Movement;* Rodriquez, "After 40 Years, Give or Take a Few, Chicano Commencement Endures".
[xiv] Garza, *Organizing the Chicano Movement;* Rodriquez, "After 40 Years, Give or Take a Few, Chicano Commencement Endures".
[xv] Rodriquez, "After 40 Years, Give or Take a Few, Chicano Commencement Endures".
[xvi] *Fists of Freedom, The Story Behind the '68 Summer Games,* Dir. George Roy, HBO Sports, 1999.
[xvii] Saqib Rahim, "The Agitator: Harry Edwards on the Revolt of Today's Black Athlete", *Vice Sports*, May 4, 2016, https://sports.vice.com/en_us/article/8qyqxv/harry-edwards-revolt-of-todays-black-athlete (accessed October 15, 2017).
[xviii] David Leonard, "What Happened to the Revolt of the Black Athlete", *Color Lines*, June 10, 1998, https://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/jcr:acdd73b8-5fe1-4aca-b7c7-fa5047c79b81/2006-09-14-revolt.pdf (accessed September 3, 2021).
[xix] *Fists of Freedom,* Dir. George Roy.
[xx] Thomas Bonk, "San Jose Statement", *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 2005, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-jun-26-sp-statue26-story.html (accessed September 3, 2021); Richard Gazzaniga, "The White Man in That Photo", *Griot*, October 3, 2015, http://griotmag.com/en/white-man-in-that-photo/

(accessed February 4, 2018).
[xxi] Ethel Pitts Walker: "Keynote Speech at the Smith & Carlos Statue Unveiling", October 16, 2005 (pdf).
[xxii] Sheila Terman Cohen, *Gaylord Nelson: Champion for Our Earth* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2010).

Chapter 5

[xxiii] Cohen, *Gaylord Nelson: Champion for Our Earth.*
[xxiv] Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, "Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day", *University of Wisconsin, Madison,* www.nelsonearthday.net/earth-day (accessed October 27, 2017), Keith Schneider, "Gaylord A. Nelson, Founder of Earth Day, Is Dead at 89," *NY Times*, July 4, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/04/politics/gaylord-a-nelson-founder-of-earth-day-is-dead-at-89.html (accessed October 27, 2017).
[xxv] Sam Whiting, "San Jose Car Burial Put Ecological Era in Gear," *SF Gate*, April 20, 2010, www.sfgate.com/green/article/San-Jose-car-burial-put-ecological-era-in-gear-3266993.php (accessed November 3, 2017); John Woestendiek, *Dog, Inc.: How a Collection of Visionaries, Rebels, Eccentrics, and Their Pets Launched the Commercial Dog Cloning Industry*, E-book (Garden City, NY: Avery Trade, 2012*).*
[xxvi] Sam Whiting, "San Jose Car Burial Put Ecological Era in Gear," *SF Gate*, April 20, 2010, www.sfgate.com/green/article/San-Jose-car-burial-put-ecological-era-in-gear-3266993.php (accessed November 3, 2017); John Woestendiek, *Dog, Inc.: How a Collection of Visionaries, Rebels, Eccentrics, and Their Pets Launched the Commercial Dog Cloning Industry*, E-book (Garden City, NY: Avery Trade, 2012*).*
[xxvii] Sam Whiting, "San Jose Car Burial Put Ecological Era in Gear."
[xxviii] "More Than 1 Billion People Will Be Involved in Earth Day", *Earth Day Network*, https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/more-than-1-billion-people-will-be-involved-in-earth-day-300245267.html (accessed November 4, 2017).